

GrACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREENVILLE ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME: 5

NUMBER: 11

NOVEMBER 17, 1987

MEETING: NOVEMBER 17, 1987

DOORS OPEN AT 7:00pm

GRIER MEMORIAL CHURCH

PROGRAM:

Well this year is about over and the time come has to elect the new officers for the 1988 year. So at this month's meeting were going to hold elections for the new officers of GrACE for the 1988 year.

Also since we now have a new BBS up and running I feel we need to let everyone in on some of the tricks of how this board runs, so I've asked George Nelson "THE SYSOP" to fill us in and give us an inside look at the board and how to access different areas of it and how to move around once we've logged on.

So now I want to encourage everyone to come out and vote and also see how the new GrACE BBS "GrACE EXPRESS" is run.

Where also going to open the floor for a question and answer time. So if you have any thing you would like to shear or any questions you would like to ask bring them with you to the meeting.

So join us Tuesday, November 17th at the Grier memorial ARP Church Fellowship Hall. Meeting begins at 7:00; program starts at 7:30.

Donald Shockley,
Vice President

Introducing
the
bran'
spankin'
new

GRACE
EXPRESS
244-8916

GIVE US A CALL HEAR?

POSITION OPEN:

The following people have agreed to run for Grace offices:

President: Don Shockley
Vice President: (OPEN)
Secretary: Mary Ann Terminato
Treasurer: Doug Slagh

Please note that the Vice President position is open. If you can help please tell one of the officers. Possibly a group of people could do this job?

Gr.A.C.E.

The Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts is an independent, non-profit organization and user's group with no affiliation with Atari Corporation, or any other organization. Membership dues (family) is \$28.00 per year. Membership includes access to the club's public domain program library, subscription to the Gr.A.C.E. newsletter, and access to the club's electronic bulletin board, Amazin' Grace (803-244-8936).

The GrACE newsletter is published monthly by the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts, 187 Saratoga Dr., Greer, SC 29651. Permission to reprint articles in any non-commercial publication is permitted without authorization, provided credit is given to the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts and the author. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Gr.A.C.E..

The GrACE newsletter will accept any articles by members on any topic found pertinent to the club. Articles will be accepted in any form, although word processing files uploaded to the club's BBS (244-8936) with a message left to Ed Culbertson or Mike Jett, Editors, are preferred.

Editors	ED Culbertson	(877-0546)
Production Editor	George Marin	(472-2815)
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GrACE OFFICERS
FOR 1987

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SECRETARY	MARY ANN TERMINATO	292-0280
TREASURER	DOUG SLAGH	877-7653

BOARD MEMBERS

NEWSLETTER EDS.	ED CULBERTSON	877-0546
LIBRARY- 8-BIT		
- 16-BIT	JIM COOPER	246-5793
- PAPER	MARY ANN TERMINATO	292-0280
BBS SYSOP	GEORGE NELSON	292-2355

=====

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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Take a moment and look at your mailing label on this issue of the 'GrACE NEWS'. Check the right-hand side of the label for the word 'DUES'. Just after this word are the month/year when your membership expires. Try to renew at least one month early. This helps us with the accounting and record keeping and also avoids your missing any issues of the newsletter.

There are two easy ways to renew:

1. At the monthly meeting talk to Doug Slagh the club treasurer and present him with \$20 (in cash or check).
2. Send your name and renewal (\$20) to:

Doug Slagh
184 Burgoyne Court
Greer, SC 29651

RAMblings

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The new BBS is up and running and I'm impressed. Not only with the BBS itself but with the fact that George Nelson got it up and running so quickly. Thanks for all of your hard work, George.

If you haven't been up on it yet then I suggest that you do so and don't forget to leave mail for the SYSOP.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Over the years a lot of people (read customers) have been pretty critical of Atari for various reasons and a lot of it has been deserved. Most of the criticism has not been aimed at the computers (you, 1200XL, you're excused) but at other aspects of running a company. Let's face it, there have been times when Atari's judgement has been nothing short of incomprehensible.

Recently, however, I read a rather lengthy article in the Pokey Press titled "Why I Don't Hate Atari". This article by Ken White gives an entirely different point of view and makes for informative reading. I will have it at the next meeting so if you want to read it just look for me. I'll be the best looking guy there.

SEAL IT WITH A KISS

Well, another letter writing campaign worked. One of the most popular programs on the market is Newsroom by Springboard. However, until recently, Atari 8-bit owners were not able to purchase it because it was not available for our machines. But so many Atari owners wrote to

Springboard asking them to consider releasing it that they have decided to do so.

Now let's get out there and buy it so that the software companies will see that we will follow through if they do.

SENSE, WE DON'T HAVE TO MAKE NO STINKING SENSE

This months Chippie Award for "The Best Worst Sales Approach in a Non Supporting Role" goes to Electronic Boutique.

This award is given to them because of a scene that I witnessed several weeks ago in Electronic Boutique. At the time that it happened it didn't make any sense and it still doesn't. Following is the conversation as I remember it. See what you think.

Place - Electronic Boutique
Characters - One salesman and three customers unknown to each other but all Atari owners.
Customer 1 - How much for an ST single sided disk drive?
Salesman (looking up) - We don't have any, we're sold out.

Customer 1 - How much for an ST monochrome monitor?
Salesman (looking up again) - We don't have any. To tell you the truth, Electronic Boutique isn't going to carry ST equipment anymore because the quality was so bad that 50% of the units didn't work.

Customer 1 - Really? I have a lot of friends that have ST's and no one that I know has ever had a problem.

Salesman - I know a lot of people with ST's also and none of them ever had a problem either.

Customer 1 - Was this only a problem at this store?

Salesman - Actually, we didn't have any problems here but the

chain as a whole had a lot of problems and we weren't the only ones. Toys-R-Us doesn't carry the ST line anymore either and I can only guess that they had the same kind of problems.

Customer 1 leaves.

Comment: It's tough to sell something you don't have even with a buildup like this.

Ken Richardson

OCTOBER MEETING

OCTOBER 20, 1987

The meeting was called to order by John Disher. (I am getting better at this).

George Nelson gave us a report on the status of the new BBS. The equipment was received at the cost of \$1315.35 and \$300.00 for the mini-ups. He reported that he decided to try the ST Express software and asked for help in setting up the BBS and the hard drive.

The BBS, now called GrACE EXPRESS, phone number 244-8936, is running on:

520 ST w/monochrome monitor
A Supra 20 Meg Hard Drive
SX212 Modem and a
Big Blue Printer.

George has asked that we Arc all files that are uploaded. The Arc and ArcX files are available from the club library or from the BBS.

Officers will be nominated and voted on at the November meeting. So, if you want a vote on how YOUR club is run, show up and vote.

Mary Anne Terminato announced that there is an attempt to set up a School Board BBS in our area for use by students and teachers. More information on this will be made available as the project continues.

At this time Rhett Bryson took the floor and gave a delightful demo of the X10 Powerhouse. He had lights and radios and TVs coming on and going off all over the place. He showed us how to program the X10 from the computer. After programming the command module, the computer does not have to be hooked into the system to control your lights and appliances. He was using the Echo program from Mistrion to program the module. A very interesting demo and very helpful when you are at home or away.

Mike Talbert then gave us a demo on how an Atari computer and Chameleon Terminal program has saved him time and many trips to the office to correct a problem with a file. He used his Atari 130 XE and dialed into his office which uses an IBM 39 mainframe computer. Someday we will just get up and go to our computer room to work. No getting up and getting dressed and just 15 steps to work. Sounds good to me.

Again all of you that are not attending the meetings either already know it all or are missing a lot of information. If you know it all, come share it with us. If you don't, come in and give us a listen.

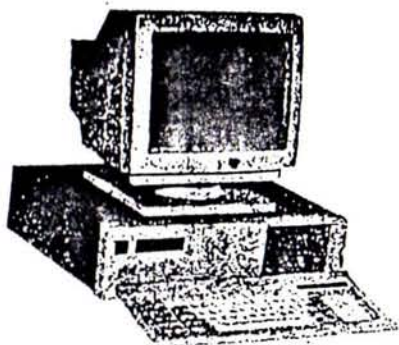
MARY ANNE TERMINATO

WIDTH

Compare our prices, quality, & support before you buy

Expert advice & assistance in choosing a complete system to suit your needs

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IBM compatibles &
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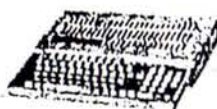
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Complete systems starting at \$750

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disk drive, M

keyboard, an



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HEIGHT

GETTING ONLINE

As most (or many) of you know by now, I have made a change of positions within the club. I am giving up the reins of the 8-bit library to move to the position of SysOp of our new bulletin board: GrACE Express!

The new hardware/software for the BBS arrived the same day as our last meeting. In the 2 1/2 weeks since that time, I have devoted much of my time at home into getting the system up and running. Due to this time commitment, I was unable to obtain enough software to create a satisfactory November Disk-of-the-Month.

Hopefully, this situation will not happen again. Plans have already been made for another member to assume the 8-Bit Librarian role. The new librarian will be Les Prichard, and he should be receiving the library and equipment sometime before the meeting.

As far as my new position, I entered into the role as SysOp with a great deal of anticipation - eager anticipation. I love to communicate with computers, and this is a great opportunity for me to have a lot more contacts with members than I may have had otherwise.

What's it like to set up a BBS and run it? Well, let's go through what it was like. Setting up the system, of course, was the first step. The first thing I had to do was have a phone line installed. This was done several days before the equipment arrived,

so I was ready to go as soon as the UPS man showed up.

I had to set up the hard drive and create partitions for the file areas. This was not as hard as I thought it would be. Connecting the modem and getting it to respond to the BBS software was a minor problem. We are using the new Atari SX-212 modem, and it does not have any switches for setting auto-answer mode for a BBS. Fortunately, with the help of Al Tompkins and Ed Culbertson, we overcame this problem with a software patch, and the modem has performed flawlessly ever since.

Creating the menus and help files was the most challenging task. Some of the screens are directly off the BBS disk, so that made it easier. Error codes would show up occasionally when the program searched for files and did not find them in the correct path. This was a lot of fun, especially since I knew the users would understand that it would take a while to get the bugs out. The software is just about impossible to crash, and all of the problems that I had were due to my mistakes. I kept moving files around from the floppy to the hard disk to the ramdisk to try to get the fastest setup with the least wear and tear on the hardware. I am pretty well satisfied with the results as they now stand.

Most of you will notice the results of this experimentation. This program is extremely fast when responding to your keypresses. I am very happy with the way I was able to set up the download area. About the only change I

would like to see in this area is for a user to be able to browse through new uploads without having to change from one file area to another.

The message base area is extremely powerful. The only change that I would like to see that I feel is needed now is the requirement that the user press the " = " key to select the base he wants to enter. It would be nice to just press the number of the base. (Maybe in a future upgrade?)

The software that we are using on this BBS is Express! ST from ICD, Inc. (the makers of SpartaDOS, US Doubler, PR: connection, etc.). I chose this software because of the ease of maintenance, reliability, and the great comments from sysops who have moved over from the other BBS software for the ST. And mainly, due to the author, a legend in Atari telecommunications - Keith Ledbetter. If any of you have ever used the Express! software for the 8-bits, you will know what I mean. This guy is amazing!

All in all, I would say that we have a great BBS in the making, and look forward to serving as your new SysOp. Please give us a call, especially you 8-bitters out there. We need uploads desperately, and have plenty of room (4 meg for the 8-bits alone!). We started out with a clean slate and most of the dead wood programs that were on the old BBS will not be found on the new one. Everyone wants fresh software, and I know its out there, so please contribute. Thanks,

George Nelson, SysOp.

Here is some news from
the Atari Corp BBS.

*CONNECTIVITY, SOLUTIONS, AND
TECHNOLOGY: ATARI ANNOUNCES
NEW PRODUCTS AT COMDEX*

(Las Vegas, NV --
Comdex Fall 87)...

In a series of major product introductions, Atari Corporation emerges as a maker of a complete line of high-performance, low-cost solutions for the business world.

New technology is showcased by Abaq, an ultra-high-performance workstation with blazing speed and dazzling graphics. The Abaq, based on a sophisticated "transputer" chip, runs more than 10 times faster than a PC/AT technology and more than 5 times faster than the 68020 with math processor. The parallel processing capability of Abaq lets a single system multiply its processing power by adding extra transputer chips.

Atari unveiled its new CD player capable of reading CD-ROM disks and of playing musical CD disks. The CD-ROM is supported by a Mega and ST-compatible DMA interface, and will retail in early 1988 for under \$600.

Atari's connectivity answer is a LAN which is compatible with the NETBIOS standard used by IBM and Novell. It communicates data at 1 megabits-per-second to PC's and over 250K bits-per-second over Appletalk. Atari is planning to manufacture "PromiseLAN" adapters for the Mega, ST, and PC computer lines.

The Atari Mega computers are showcased with a variety of solid business solutions. Desktop publishing is represented by both the Atari SLM804 Laser Printer and by G.O. Graphics, who are porting their Deskset program (CompuGraphics compatible) which Atari will market. Word Perfect is displaying the recently shipped Word Perfect ST and Atari is displaying Microsoft Write. A group of vendors are appealing to VARs with vertical packages running under the IDRIS multi-user multi-tasking operating system. Several new high-end CAD packages are on display including Foresight's Drafix 1.

Atari expanded its PC-compatible offerings by adding two new models, the PC2 (PC XT compatible) and PC4 (PC AT compatible), both with EGA graphics, high clock speeds, and low price tags. A variation of the PC3 will operate in VGA graphics mode as well. The PC2 and PC4 will be offered with 3.5" or 5.25" floppy disks and with hard disks. These new models join the PC1, which at \$799 is a basic 512K PC XT compatible, suitable for use as a LAN workstation and for standalone personal computing. The PC2 includes XT-compatible slots, while the PC4's slots are PC AT compatible.

"We offer complete systems for the office," said Atari president Sam Tramiel. "I can see Atari Mega computers with laser printers as desktop publishing stations exchanging data with a satellite group of PC1's as LAN stations. An entire office environment can be created. The PC, the Macintosh, and the Atari computers co-exist. Each can do the things they do best."

IT'S MAGIC

Data Pacific has announced that version 4.52 of the Magic Sac is ready for shipment. This version fixes a number of minor bugs and gives hard disk support. The cost of the upgrade is \$20 and comes with a new instruction manual.

Yes, there will be another version -- 5.0 and it will have the **TRANSLATOR** support. So, just what is the **TRANSLATOR**? Well, it's a hardware modification that allows a disk drive (Atari type) to read and write Macintosh disks. This mod will even work with the built-in drives of the 1040 ST and the 520 STFM. The cost is \$279.95.

Just a short comment here about the Magic Sac. I have purchased one and it works very well. I have been pleased with the product and Data Pacific's customer support (just look on Genie). I feel that the Translator will do exactly as advertised. Now, I have to decide do I need (read want) a Translator or do I need a hard disk -- decisions, decisions!

Ed Culbertson

TECH TIPS

*Print Shop: Early copies to the program do not completely support the 850. By inserting the Print Shop Graphics Disk and pressing the letter "U", you will be able to update your Print Shop disk with a program contained on the graphics Disk.

Atari to Ship Small-Footprint Mega Systems

By Renee Mathews

INFOWORLD
OCTOBER 19, 1987

compliments
AL THOMPSON

Atari Corp. recently announced it has begun shipping its Mega 2 and Mega 4 small-footprint PCs, which are designed especially for small businesses and desktop publishing applications.

The Mega 2 includes 2 megabytes of RAM, and the Mega 4 comes with 4 megabytes. Both models are based on the Motorola 68000 microprocessor and operate at 8 MHz. Both computers also are compatible with software and peripherals for the Atari ST line of computers, the company said.

The Mega systems feature a 720K, 3½-inch floppy diskette drive, a Centronics-style parallel port, an RS-232C serial port, a full numeric keypad, a cursor-



Atari's Mega 4 personal computer includes a full numeric keypad, a cursor-control keypad, programmable function keys, and a mouse.

control keypad with editing keys, 10 programmable function keys, and a mouse.

The Mega 2 is priced at \$1,699.95 with a 12-inch monochrome monitor and \$1,899.95 with a color monitor. The Mega 4 sells for \$2,399.95 with a

monochrome monitor and \$2,599.95 with a color monitor.

The computers are available now from Atari business computer centers.

Atari Corp., 1196 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94088; (408) 745-2000.

Atari Explorer

I have just purchased the Nov/Dec issue of Atari Explorer and there is an article on the new Mega ST.

OPEN-IT-UP

Inside is the same Motorola M68000 microprocessor (same as in the 1040 and 520 ST and the Apple Mac). There are a number of custom chips (Shifter, MMU, GLUE, etc.) and the infamous BLITTER chip. This chip handles the data-movement-intensive activities.

Wonder why Atari did not use the M68020 chip, since this is to be a new and improved version?

One nice thing are the expansion slots, much like the Apples and IBM machines.

It would be nice to have a Magic Sac card, an IBM card, and a 20 or 30 meg hard card for these things!

The new machines also have the new TOS which has had some code optimized and some minor bugs fixed (we hope).

A PRETTY BOX

The CPU sits under the monitor and the keyboard is attached via cable. This is very nice, and looks much like the IBM.

But I still want to know why is the on/off switch still on the back of the CPU?

It's a nice design, but I'll keep my 1040.

ED CULBERTSON

RAMDISKS FOR YOUR 320 XE

By Alan Friedman

After successfully adding a new 320K upgrade to my 130XE, I faced a whole new problem. What to do with all this power?

There are a lot of ramdisk programs on the 256XL upgrade public domain disk, but due to a difference in how the 256XL upgrade accesses the ram, these programs won't work on the 130XE upgrade.

Of course, Sparta DOS will configure the additional ram into a ramdisk, but I wanted to find a program to do it cheaply (Sparta DOS is \$40) and one that would work with DOS 2.0S and 2.5. I figured the cost of the time on CompuServe would be a good investment, and it was. Doing a search in the Utility section of the Atari 8-bit library I found two XE ramdisk programs. They were RAMDISK and SMARTIR.230. Both of these programs have DOC files that are fairly thorough.

RAMDISK configures the additional ram into two 707-sector ramdisks. They are automatically set up as D3 and D4. They are not initialized and before being used must be initialized through DOS or an XIO command. I tried a copy of programs with these ramdisks. I set up the AMISXM10 bulletin board with the ramdisk initialized and everything went fine. I did find several programs that did not like the change in the OS and therefore tried the other ramdisk program, SMARTIR.230.

SMARTIR.230 only created one 707-sector ramdisk and only worked with DOS 2.0S, however I was able to use KYAN PASCAL with this system. This only increased the ramdisk by 230 sectors over the original 130k ramdisk, but this gave me the additional room I needed to keep DUP.SYS on the ramdisk and to transfer the rest of the KIX commands for increased speed of operation.

Since this is a fairly new upgrade I am sure it won't be long before someone comes up with a program that uses all the ram as a ramdisk and allows you to decide what drive you want the ramdisk to become and that will be DOS 2.5 compatible.

With the promised arrival of the double sided double density disk drive from Atari just around the corner, this may become the most useful upgrade for the XE to come down the pike so far.

reprinted from
CURRENT NOTES

**THE P:R:
CONNECTION
FROM ICD**

by Gary Loveless

As of late, ICD has been on a rampage with massive support for the Atari 8-bit line. One of the latest releases is the P:R: Connection.

The P:R: Connection is an interface between the Atari 8-bit and other RS-232 devices. These devices may include modems, parallel printers, serial printers, hard drives and many other things. The P:R: Connection was made as an alternative to buying the now "extinct" Atari 850 interface. While there are Atari 850 interfaces still out there, they run as much as \$120, while the P:R: Connection has a list price of just \$59.95.

The P:R: Connection is very simple to set up. Since it draws power from the host computer, make sure that it is the peripheral plugged into the computer port. The nice thing about this interface is that it allows you to "daisy chain." Modem cables and printer cables have to be bought separately. (ICD sells these for \$16)

I have not run into any problems with this unit myself, and I use it every day. I have a modem and printer hooked up to it and it works fine.

It is fully compatible with the old 850 interface. Being small and compact it takes up very little room at the computer desk. It has no external power supply, thus telling you it draws power from the host computer. (1200xl owners note: your computer requires internal modification before the P:R: Connection will work properly with it.)

THE INTERFACE PORTS

R1: This is the main RS232 serial port since it supports full handshaking.

R2: This is the other RS232 port and is really only used when you need an extra (make sure the software supports the 'R2:' device.)

P: This is your parallel printer port.

I have had my P:R: Connection for about 2 months now and have never had any problems with it yet. It is worth the purchase of the P:R: Connection compared to the 850 interface.

The only small problem that I regret to tell you is that since the P:R: Connection only has 2 RS232 ports it does not allow you to do "porting" like you can do on an Atari 850 using 'R4.' And that's a minor problem for the majority of applications that the average user would use it for.

So you're saying "Is this thing really worth it?" Well yes it is! Personally, I wanted to upgrade from 1200 baud from 300 baud, and I wasn't going to wait for the Atari SX212. So I called a dealer and got an Avatex 1200hc for \$115. "Wow" I thought, then he said "What kinda computer you have" I said "Atari" then he said "You'll need an interface". I thought to myself "what the hell is that" So he said "We have the Atari 850 interface for \$119.95 or the P:R: Connection for 59.95" So seeing that I didn't have that much money I got the P:R: instead. Just goes to show you what price alternatives can do for you.

All you people have fun out there, especially the ones in the land!!

reprinted from
THE POKEY PRESS

by Jim Woodward

THE POKEY PRESS

ATARI BUYS FEDERATED

It seems that a few weeks ago, Atari U.S. Corporation bought a chain of electronics stores called Federated for \$67.3 million. This is not to be confused with the Federated that runs large department stores. Federated had 65 stores in 4 states (including California) and sold televisions, video cassette recorders, video cameras, stereos, and rented video cassettes.

Notice something? No video game systems. No computers. Is Atari going to add a certain brand of video game systems and computers into those stores? You better believe it. Imagine, what a great way to get your products to the people.

Now for the big problem. What if you own a computer store down the street from one of these Atari/Federated stores? How competitive can you be price wise? While Atari can put them into their stores at cost, the independent store has to deal with distributors, thus raising the price he has to pay for the machine. Then the independent must add a few dollars for himself, and then you have the price you pay for your computer from him. But why pay him when you can go down the street and pay less, and get it straight from Atari. At least that way you are guaranteed that if there is a problem, you are going to be satisfied. You may not get that from the independent store.

I'm no big genius when it comes to money (remember, I'm the guy who said not to buy Atari stock), but I think that things could be a little sticky in those states where this situation occurs. We'll just have to wait to see what happens.

POKE 694,0

1 = QNJD785-1
2 = RMIG4;6.2
3 = SLHFS:7/3
4 = TKDA2-0(4
5 = UJN@3<1)5
6 = UIMC072*6
7 = WHLB1>3+7
8 = XGCM>1<\$8
9 = YFBL?-%9

LPRINT

1 = MQSHOW!\$
2 = 2RPKLU"
3 = OSQJMW\$!
4 = HTUMJPS\$
5 = IUWLKQ%'
6 = JUTOHR&\$
7 = KWUNIS'%
8 = DXZAF/(*
9 = EY[OG])+

The figures in the POKE 694,0 column will get you back to normal characters from each of the codes. The figures in the LPRINT column type (LPRINT ") so that your printer can accept each line you wish to encode.

GIVE US A CALL
AMAZIN' GRACE
(ALIAS GRACE EXPRESS)

244-8936

Ha Ha



He He

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ABACUS Atari User's Group
POKING FUN
By Delmar Severy

Using an Atari POKE command can make it very easy to send secret messages. If you PEEK at location 694 you will discover that 0 is the default number there. By Poking in other numbers you can get nine easy codes.

Here are two charts to help you have some fun.

wise sayings

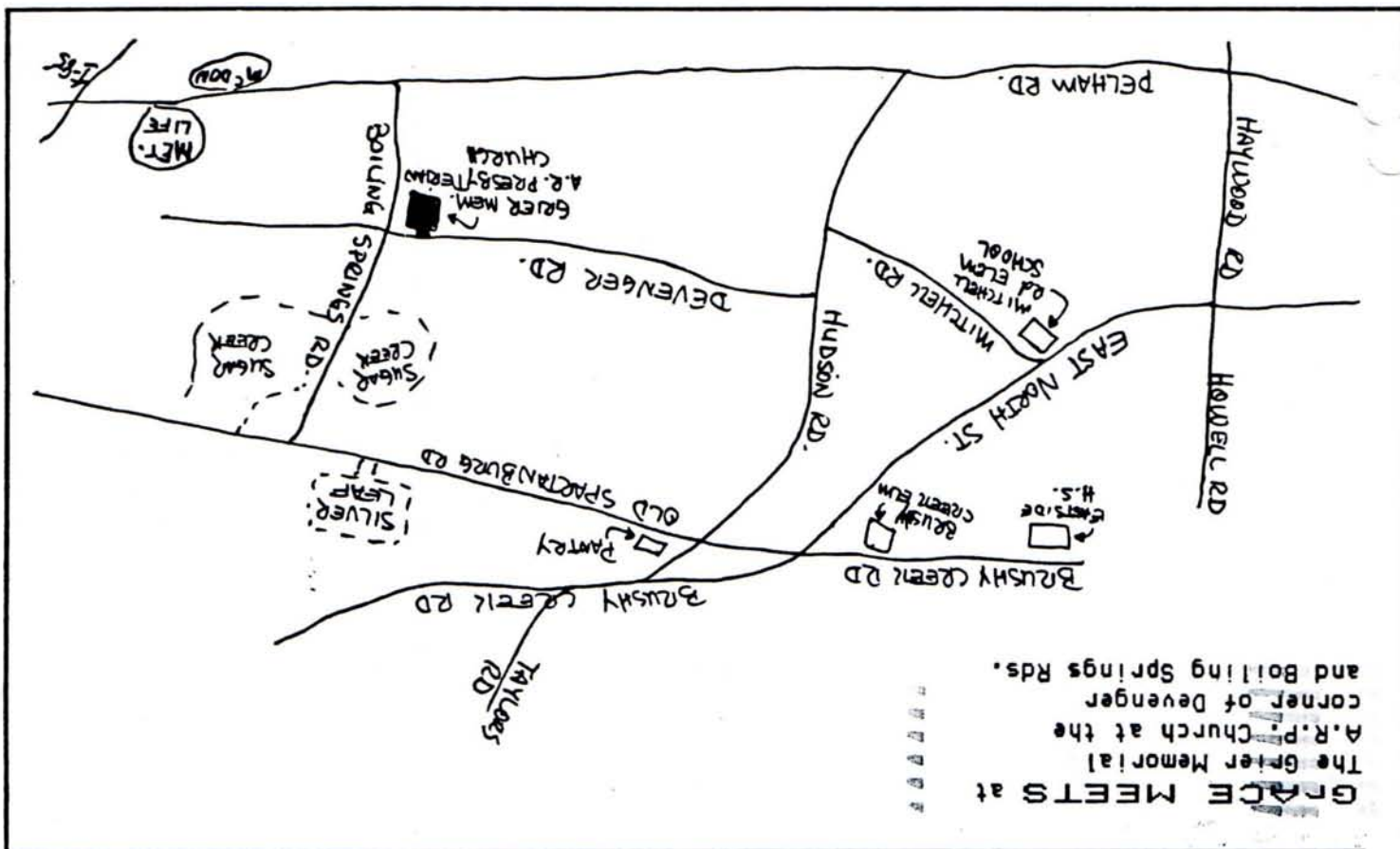
-- The attention span of a computer is only as long as its electrical cord.

-- A computer makes as many mistakes in 2 seconds as 20 men working 20 years.

-- Any given program, when running, is obsolete.

-- Any significantly advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

murphy



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